

Rollout and timing of transit program questioned

BY SCOTT UNGER
Key West Citizen

Two initiatives designed to get residents out of their cars are underway, but their rollout and timeline raised the eyebrows of one Key West City Commissioner.

The Key West Planning Department received \$250,000 in grant funding last year from the Florida Department of Transportation to develop a bicycle and pedestrian master plan, which will create a safe bicycling network of lanes and access routes around Key West

and Stock Island. In addition, the department partnered with FDOT's South Florida Commuter Service to launch a marketing and education campaign called Car-Free Key West, which is designed to encourage tourists and residents to utilize alternative forms of transportation.

While the master plan won't be completed until early next year, according to Key West Bike and Pedestrian Coordinator Chris Hamilton, the Car-Free campaign launches this month, which led Commissioner Sam

Kaufman to question the timing at a recent board meeting.

"I have to say that I have some concerns about this. I really like the ideas that you're presenting but I'm afraid that we're taking a very piecemeal approach to this overall problem," Kaufman said. "We don't really have the infrastructure currently for safe biking."

"I think it's a fantastic campaign, I really like it, but I'm just concerned that the campaign may be com-



BRIAN BASHAM/The Citizen

Bicyclists head up Simonton Street, fighting mid-day car traffic on the street. The Key West Planning Department's bicycle and pedestrian marketing campaign rollout has raised questions.

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Plan

Continued from Page 1A

ing prematurely before we have everything else in place where by folks could really be car free."

The Duval Loop Old Town circulator bus (designed to reduce congestion in the city's commercial core) was cited by Kaufman as just one of the elements not yet operational despite being part of the marketing campaign.

The city hopes to launch the free bus service in April, but still needs additional drivers for the routes, according to KeyWest Transit Project Manager Carolyn Hala.

"Once we get our full time drivers in and trained and we get possibly two or three relief drivers, we'll (launch)," she said.

The educational component of the Car-Free cam-

paign will lay the groundwork for the changes to infrastructure that will be made next year through the master plan, according to Hamilton.

"They are distinct projects with the same goal. The Car-Free Key West campaign is about information and education (and) the bicycle and pedestrian plan project is mostly about infrastructure and facilities," Hamilton said. "They go hand-in-hand and don't need to be sequential."

"We don't need to wait a year or two on implementing infrastructure improvements that may come out of the bike pedestrian plan to get these important messages out."

The partnership with SFCS has no expiration and the agency will continue helping as long as its services are needed, according

to Hamilton.

"The FDOT district offices around the state provide commuter services as a base part of the transportation program, so if a city needs assistance they provide it," he said.

For the marketing campaign, SFCS will spend between \$200,000 and \$300,000 annually working with Diaz and Cooper Advertising Agency. The team will spread the Car-Free message through traditional and social media outreach, grassroots efforts with local groups and businesses and branding efforts including maps, signage and brightly colored wraps on the Duval Loop bus (which is funded separately through the Key West alternative transportation fund).

"The effort begins with some really beautiful maps that we're going to be creat-

ing. And the maps are going to highlight not only the streets that are less congested, that are safer for bikes and pedestrians to use, but it's also going to highlight the new Duval Loop," Diaz and Cooper President Omi Diaz Cooper told the commission.

The first edition of the map shows roads with bike lanes and side paths, as well as highlighted "bike boulevards" showcasing side streets with less traffic.

The city hired Toole Design Group to assist in the production of the bike and pedestrian master plan,

which is estimated for completion in February 2018, according to Hamilton.

Toole is assessing what is already in place in terms of paths and signage, then will conduct field research including counts of cars and bikers to find out how to improve the transportation system. Meetings seeking public input will be held in May and at some point this fall, according to Hamilton.

Suggested work will be grouped into one, five and 10-year projects, with smaller projects, such as resurfacing a roadway, able to move

forward quickly. Potential long-term projects, such as protected bike infrastruc-

tures that separate bike lanes from traffic, will be researched by Toole so funding requests and design work can be cleared by FDOT.

The two projects are coordinated, using the same cartographers and branding throughout the process. Maps and brochures issued through the Car-Free campaign will be updated as decisions are made regarding the master plan, Hamilton said.

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THE CITIZEN

KEY WEST
Saint Patrick's Day

Youth lacrosse roundup — Page 4B

Friday

March 17, 2017 • Vol. 161 • No. 70 • 50 pages

WEATHER



Today: High 84, low 64
Tomorrow: High 85, low 65

KEY WEST

Board closed
due to poor look

County Board in Key West closed down for almost an hour on Thursday morning because of a power out.

County Clerk said about 10 a.m. power went out in the County Board room. County Clerk said it was about 10 a.m. when power went out in the County Board room. County Clerk said it was about 10 a.m. when power went out in the County Board room.

FLORIDA

Scot's message
sends chills

Florida governor took a new approach Thursday after the killing of a police officer by a man who said he was a member of the Proud Boys. The governor said he was "shocked and saddened" by the death of the officer.

MADE IN

Trump budget
breaks military spending

President Donald Trump unveiled a \$1.3 trillion budget Thursday, promising a 10 percent cut in defense spending. The budget would cut \$54 billion from the defense budget over the next five years.

ON THE RADIO

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Board approves museum zoning change

BY KATE BROWN

Key West Staff

The McMillan Maritime Museum took a step closer to becoming a part of the Key West community on Thursday morning when the Board of Planning and Development approved a zoning change for the museum's new building.

The museum's new building, located at 1000 Duval St., will be a 10,000-sq-ft structure that will house the museum's collection of maritime artifacts. The building will also serve as a community center for the museum's programs and events.

The Board of Planning and Development approved the zoning change by a 5-2 vote. The change will allow the museum to use the building for a variety of purposes, including as a community center, a museum, and a place for public events.

The museum's new building is a significant addition to the Key West community. It will provide a place for the museum to store and display its collection of maritime artifacts, and it will also serve as a community center for the museum's programs and events.

SOAKING UP THE SUN



Local residents, including children, are seen at the beach at the Key West Community Center on Thursday afternoon. The key along with several other residents from the Community Center is seen in Key West on Thursday morning, going to the beach at the Key West Community Center.

Supreme Court defines sex in Key West case

BY KATE BROWN

Key West Staff

A no longer is a question of "what is it?" in the case of Florida's Supreme Court ruling Thursday on whether a law banning "sexual harassment" applies to a case involving a woman who was sexually harassed by a man. The court ruled that the law applies to the case.

Battles over tax credits for housing projects

BY KATE BROWN

Key West Staff

Several development groups are battling for the annual \$100 million in tax credits for housing projects in the Key West community. The groups are competing for the credits, which are used to fund the construction of new housing units.

The Florida Housing Finance Corp. is the agency that administers the tax credits. It has received applications from several groups, and it is now reviewing them. The groups are hoping to receive the credits to fund their housing projects.

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Residents are seen on Duval Street, looking out at the ocean. The Key West Planning Department's transit and pedestrian marketing campaign is seen in Key West on Thursday morning.